
COURTENAY PLACE PARK

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Committee approval of the concept plan for the Courtenay Place Park.

2. Executive Summary

The Courtenay Place Park project is part of the “three parks in three years” plan. The project will extend and improve the existing park on the corner of Taranaki Street and Courtenay Place and follows on from the successful redevelopment of Glover Park. The enhancement of the area includes enlarged green areas, additional trees, provision of generous paved areas and additional amenities such as increased lighting, shelter, quality street furniture and public art.

Existing parking and traffic will be relocated from the existing access lane to the edges of the enlarged park and will cater for short term users who currently use the nearby facilities. In addition intersection improvements will also reduce the number of pedestrian accidents (currently the highest rate in the CBD) and thereby improve the pedestrian environment.

The development is scheduled to commence early in 2006/07 subject to a successful contract being awarded. The budget for the project is \$1.5 million.

The project is also scheduled to coincide with the redevelopment of the heritage men’s toilet into a wine cellar/bar.

Over the past 12 months the media have reported on these proposals and direct communication seeking feedback from stakeholders is scheduled to commence in early June.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree to the concept plan for the Courtenay Place Park.*

3. *Note that feedback is being sought from nearby businesses and the general public*
4. *Note that there may be changes to the concept as a result of feedback received and costing the project following the detailed design and tendering processes.*
5. *Note that it is proposed to advertise the kerbside parking changes in parallel with the feed back process. This is a legal requirement under the bylaws, and provides an opportunity for affected parties to make a submission on the proposed parking changes.*

4. Background

Extending the existing pocket park adjacent to the heritage men's toilets on the corner of Courtenay Place and Taranaki Street was first proposed when Courtenay Place was redeveloped in 1995; however funding priority was given to the upgrade of the eastern end of Courtenay Place. In 1999 Council subsequently upgraded this area as part of Stage 2 of the Courtenay Place upgrade project.

In December 2002 Council approved the proposal to redevelop the men's toilet site into a wine bar. Resource consent for the redevelopment has been granted with design and negotiations ongoing. This development will coincide with the park site works, hence minimizing construction impacts and ensuring its successful integration with the park. This work has been covered positively by the press over the past 12 months.

Jan Gehl's 2004 Public Spaces and Public Life Study (pg 52) also identified the enhancement of this space as having the potential to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic and give greater priority to pedestrians.

A report to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 9th of March 2005 outlined the strategic context, programming and funding for pocket parks in the Te Aro area. Council agreed to proceed with advancing three urban parks: Glover Park, Courtenay/Taranaki and a third site in lower Te Aro. The Glover Park upgrade has been completed, the lower Te Aro option is being investigated as part of a private development, and officers are now proceeding with the Courtenay/Taranaki site.

A 2005 feasibility study investigated traffic and urban design issues and concluded that the area should be redeveloped as a single open space while still providing for required vehicle movements and some car parking. This study identified that there are more pedestrian movements than vehicular across the Taranaki/Courtenay intersection and consequently has the highest rate of pedestrian accidents in the CBD. As a result it is proposed to improve the pedestrian amenity at this intersection by improving pedestrian crossing areas. In addition Council is seeking to improve public transport facilities along Courtenay Place in collaboration with Wellington Regional Council.

5. Discussion

The proposed design builds on the existing park with the removal of the vehicle access way. By extending the park to the built edge, increased use and activities in the space are anticipated, particularly in southerly conditions. The design builds on the recent enhancements retaining existing paving, trees and seating.

The concept plan is attached and will be presented in more detail at the committee meeting. The park's features include:

- An enlarged open space with generous grassed and paved areas. The raised grass area lined with trees will create a spatial separation from the vehicular traffic along Courtenay Place.
- Additional trees, seating, lighting and public art will create a strong sense of place.
- Improved pedestrian safety and crossing amenities. The relocation of existing through traffic around the park will eliminate the current conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. Kerb extensions and the relocation of the Taranaki pedestrian crossing southwards will create a shorter more direct route for crossing pedestrians.
- The wine bar within the historic building will create a focus within the park that will attract local residents, shoppers and visitors.
- The space will integrate with the St James Theatre frontage. A large paved area will extend from Taranaki Street through to the St James Theatre.

The project work can be managed in two stages minimizing impacts on adjacent businesses. The existing access way will remain open while the Courtenay Place/ Taranaki Street intersection is reconfigured. This work is scheduled to commence at the end of August. Once this stage is completed the access way will be closed and the park construction undertaken. It is expected that the park will be completed in early 2007.

The budget for this project is \$1,500 000.

This consists of:

- \$250 000 intersection improvements.
- \$850 000 civil works and landscape construction.
- \$100 000 indirect costs.
- \$200 000 soft works, lighting and public art.

This will be funded from the carry forward of the Inner City Park and Reserves Purchase projects.

The design can be implemented within budget and within the next financial year. A 15% contingency has been included in the budget to allow for the potential escalation in costs.

The removal of the access lane necessitates the removal of fifteen car parks and two loading zones. This will be compensated by the addition of nine new car parks adjacent to the park along with two new loading zones. This amount of parking is considered sufficient to provide for short term demand as there is a substantial amount of parking in the vicinity with car parking buildings in Courtenay Place and Taranaki Street. A traffic resolution will be required to formalise the changes to car parking.

6. Public Feedback

The proposed park will be advertised in APW, there will be an advertisement on the Our Wellington page of the Dominion Post on the 22nd of June and information available on line. Specific feedback is being sought from nearby businesses. All feedback is required by the 6th of July. It is also proposed to advertise the traffic resolution required to change the kerbside parking in the vicinity of the park in conjunction with the above process. Council approval will be sought for the traffic resolution in late August.

7. Conclusion

The project will enhance and improve the functioning of this important inner city public space. The park will provide the lower Te Aro urban area with another park that will provide long term benefit as activities in the area continue to diversify and intensify.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

*The upgrade project has a very strong fit with the Council's Strategic Outcomes:
Outcome: 1 More Liveable. Outcome: 2 Stronger Sense of Place.
Outcome: 7 Better Connected. Outcome: 9 Safer.*

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

CX 409cf, CX033CF Reserves Purchases.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The site is in the immediate vicinity of Te Aro Pa and consultation with the Tenth's Trust will be undertaken.

4) Decision-Making

The funds for the project have are included in the LTCCP for 2005/06 and 2006/07.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Consultation is currently being undertaken.

b) Consultation with Maori

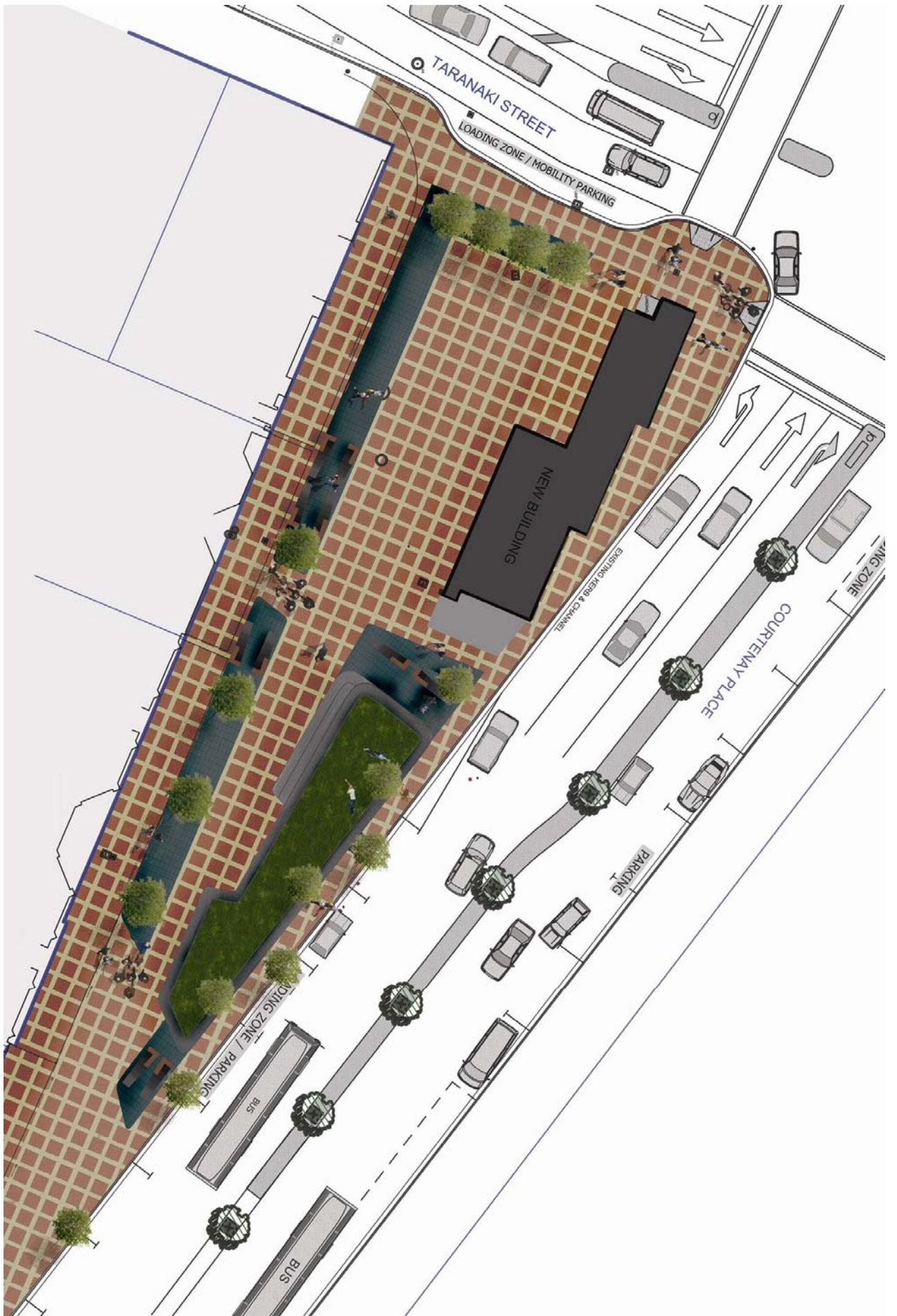
To be undertaken.

6) Legal Implications

Not relevant.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The project is part of the Centre Development Programme and fits within the policy guidance of the central city greening and public space development plans.



COURTENAY PLACE PARK CONCEPT PLAN